AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Listing of Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently amended) A method comprising:

creating a rule-based grammar having a wildcard identifier in place of a predefined category of words;

defining rules to produce artificial combinations of unique sounds in a language, where each artificial combination represents a pronunciation of the words in the predefined category, and represents a generic word that is defined in a speech engine's vocabulary database;

generating a set of artificial combinations of unique sounds by substituting the wildcard identifier with the rules; and

in response to human speech specifying a wildcard word, determining a ~~number~~ set of potential words spoken by the user by finding the generic words and non-generic words that phonetically match the wildcard word, wherein the non-generic words are not part of the rule-based grammar, ~~and then~~ assigning each of the generic and non-generic words a confidence level based on a set of rules followed by the speech engine, removing the generic words from the set of potential words spoken by the user, and selecting a remaining word from the set of potential words spoken by the user having a highest confidence level.

2. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the rule-based grammar comprises a context-free grammar (CFG).

3. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, ~~additionally comprising selecting a non-generic word having the highest confidence level~~ <u>wherein the remaining word is a non-generic word</u>.

4. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein a unique sound in a language comprises a phoneme.

5. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein said generating a set of artificial combinations of unique sounds by substituting the wildcard identifier with the rules comprises converting the wildcard rule-based grammar into a standard rule-based grammar.

6. (Currently Amended) A method comprising:

specifying a wildcard context-free grammar (CFG) which includes a wildcard identifier in place of a predefined category of words, each of which are defined in the speech engine's vocabulary database;

specifying a set of rules that define artificial combinations of unique sounds in a language, where each artificial combination represents a pronunciation of the words in the predefined category, and corresponds to a generic word that is defined in a speech engine's vocabulary database;

converting the wildcard CFG file into a recognized CFG grammar file by generating a

set of artificial combinations of unique sounds based on the rules; and

in response to human speech having one or more spoken units, generating a results

object having a number of generic words corresponding to artificial combinations appropriate

to a given spoken unit, and having a number of non-generic words in the speech engine's

vocabulary database appropriate to a given spoken unit, wherein the non-generic words are

not part of the CFG, each generic word and non-generic word having an associated

confidence level based on a set of rules followed by the speech engine, removing the generic

words from the results object, and selecting a remaining word from the results object having a

highest confidence level.

7. (Original) The method of claim 6, additionally comprising querying the results object for a

word having the highest confidence level in the speech engine's vocabulary database.

8. (Original) The method of claim 6, wherein a unique sound in a language comprises a

phoneme.

9. (Currently Amended) A machine-readable medium having stored thereon data representing

sequences of instructions, the sequences of instructions which, when executed by a processor,

cause the processor to perform the following:

create a rule-based grammar having a wildcard identifier in place of a predefined

category of words;

define rules to produce artificial combinations of unique sounds in a language, where

each artificial combination represents a pronunciation of the words in the predefined category,

and represents a generic word that is defined in a speech engine's vocabulary database;

generate a set of artificial combinations of unique sounds by substituting the wildcard

identifier with the rules; and

in response to human speech specifying a wildcard word, determine a ~~number~~ set of

potential words spoken by the user by finding the generic words and non-generic words that

phonetically match the wildcard word, wherein the non-generic words are not part of the rule-

based grammar, ~~and then~~ assigning each of the generic and non-generic words a confidence

level based on a set of rules followed by the speech engine, removing the generic words from

the set of potential words spoken by the user, and selecting a remaining word from the set of

potential words spoken by the user having a highest confidence level.

10. (Original) The machine-readable medium of claim 9, wherein the rule-based grammar

comprises a context-free grammar (CFG).

11. (Original) The machine-readable medium of claim 9, wherein a unique sound in a

language comprises a phoneme.

12. (Original) An apparatus comprising: at least one processor; and a machine-readable

medium having instructions encoded thereon, which when executed by the processor, are

capable of directing the processor to:

create a rule-based grammar having a wildcard identifier in place of a predefined category of words;

define rules to produce artificial combinations of unique sounds in a language, where each artificial combination represents a pronunciation of the words in the predefined category, and represents a generic word that is defined in a speech engine's vocabulary database;

generate a set of artificial combinations of unique sounds by substituting the wildcard identifier with the rules; and

in response to human speech specifying a wildcard word, determine a ~~number~~ <u>set</u> of potential words spoken by the user by finding the generic words and non-generic words that phonetically match the wildcard word, <u>wherein the non-generic words are not part of the rule-based grammar,</u> ~~and then~~ assigning each of the <u>generic and non-generic</u> words a confidence level <u>based on a set of rules followed by the speech engine, removing the generic words from the set of potential words spoken by the user, and selecting a remaining word from the set of potential words spoken by the user having a highest confidence level.</u>

13. (Original) The apparatus of claim 12, wherein the rule-based grammar comprises a context-free grammar (CFG).

14. (Original) The apparatus of claim 12, wherein a unique sound in a language comprises a phoneme.

15. (Currently Amended) An apparatus comprising:

means for creating a rule-based grammar having a wildcard identifier in place of a

predefined category of words;

means for defining rules to produce artificial combinations of unique sounds in a

language, where each artificial combination represents a pronunciation of the words in the

predefined category, and represents a generic word that is defined in a speech engine's

vocabulary database;

means for generating a set of artificial combinations of unique sounds by substituting

the wildcard identifier with the rules; and

in response to human speech specifying a wildcard word, means for determining a

~~number~~ set of potential words spoken by the user by finding the generic words and non-

generic words that phonetically match the wildcard word, <u>wherein the non-generic words are</u>

<u>not part of the rule-based grammar,</u> ~~and then~~ assigning each of the <u>generic and non-generic</u>

words a confidence level <u>based on a set of rules followed by the speech engine, removing the</u>

<u>generic words from the set of potential words spoken by the user, and selecting a remaining</u>

<u>word from the set of potential words spoken by the user having a highest confidence level.</u>

16. (Original) The apparatus of claim 15, wherein the rule-based grammar comprises a

context-free grammar (CFG).

17. (Original) The apparatus of claim 15, wherein a unique sound in a language comprises a

phoneme.

8

18. (Currently amended) A system comprising:

a conversion module to accept a wildcard rule-based grammar file as input, wherein the rule-based grammar has a wildcard identifier in place of a predefined category of words, wherein the rule-based grammar defines rules to produce artificial combinations of unique sounds in a language, and to convert the wildcard rule-based grammar file to a set of artificial combinations of unique sounds in a language by substituting the wildcard identifier with the rules;

a speech engine to accept human speech having a wildcard word as input, and to determine a ~~number~~ set of potential words matching the wildcard word, the set of potential words comprising a number of generic words and non-generic words corresponding to the artificial combinations of unique sounds in a language, ~~and a number of non-generic words~~ wherein the non-generic words are not part of the rule-based grammar; and

a speech adapter to interact with the speech engine by querying the speech engine for potential words matching the wildcard word, wherein each of the generic and non-generic words are assigned a confidence level based on a set of rules followed by the speech engine, wherein the generic words are removed from the set of potential words, wherein a remaining word from the set of potential words having a highest confidence level is selected, and ~~by~~ returning the selected word which is most likely to match the wildcard word spoken by the user.

19. (Original) The system of claim 18, wherein the unique sounds in a language comprise phonemes.

20. (Original) The system of claim 18, wherein the rule-based grammar is a context-free

grammar (CFG).

21. (Original) The system of claim 18, wherein the speech engine comprises the conversion

module.